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For More Info

Check out other Massachusetts marinas on the web at www.charternet.com/marinas/massachusetts.html.

Clean Marina Operations & Management

The most efficient and effective way to run a “Clean Marina” is to incorporate environmentally-sound approaches and management strategies into all aspects of marina operation. The basic goal is to protect water quality and local marine habitats to create a safe and healthy environment and to sustain a strong marine business. A well-run Clean Marina encourages boaters to do their part to protect the environment. This positive attitude is good for business, with boaters spreading the word that your Clean Marina is a great place keep your boat.

This chapter focuses on ways to incorporate a Clean Marina philosophy into daily marina operations. It begins with staff training, which is the key to enlisting your employees in environmental protection efforts. Then it discusses some of the many ways to educate your customers about how to keep the coastal environment clean. Finally, this chapter discusses strategies to make Clean Marina practices pay for themselves through charging for new services, selling new products, and adding surcharges or itemized environmental charges for boaters.

This chapter discusses overall Clean Marina operations and management. See Chapter 4 for Best Management Practices to reduce the environmental impacts of the specific activities that occur at your marina.

3.1 Staff Training

Marina staff and dock crew can be effective spokespersons, providing boaters with valuable information on how to protect the environment. Because they are the front-line for communicating with customers, staff actions and attitude can greatly influence boater behavior at your marina. Consequently, it is essential that your staff is prepared to provide customers with the right message, at the right time, in an appropriate manner. Routinely reinforce the following concepts with your staff so that they are comfortable communicating environmental information to boaters:

- Clean water is important to the marina business.
- Pollution problems have solutions, so work with customers to achieve them.
- Keeping a Clean Marina should be part of the daily work routine.
- Be alert and prevent pollution, rather than cleaning it up afterward. Prevention is both cheaper and more effective.

- Work with the boaters, rather than being confrontational. Building a positive working relationship and leading by example is more likely to persuade boaters to do their share to keep the environment clean than lectures and reprimands.

Regularly scheduled training sessions will help your staff learn what to look out for at the marina. Keep simple records of when you hold these training sessions, what was covered, and who attended. Topics that should be covered include:

- Spill response and proper handling of hazardous liquids, solvents, fuels, and lubricants.
- Trash and maintenance debris.
- Boat sewage discharge.
- Boat maintenance and cleaning activities.

Refer to the activities listed in Chapter 4 for more information on appropriate practices that you can share with your staff.

3.2 Tools to Help Communicate “Clean Boating” to Customers

A wide range of tools is available to communicate your Clean Marina message. The most important tool, as discussed above, is staff-customer interaction. This regular communication can be augmented by a mix of other tools, which are discussed below.

Customer Contracts

Most marinas have annual lease contracts for customers who rent dock or land space and moorings. An effective way to educate boaters and to enlist their formal support for protecting the environment is to clearly state the marina’s environmental rules in the marina contract. Some marinas call this a clean boating pledge, an environmental contract, or a best management practice agreement. Specifically, the customer contract could require boaters to:

- Conduct all vessel maintenance activities in designated locations and use dust-free tools when appropriate.
- Use appropriate spill prevention and collection measures during all maintenance activities, including oil changes.
- Use environmentally-preferable “green” cleaning products, such as biodegradable soaps, whenever possible.
- Use oil absorbent pads in bilges at all times and install fuel/air separators in the fuel tank vent line.

Training

Training programs that cover a broad range of issues for marina staff and boaters are available from the following organizations: Massachusetts Maritime Academy (508) 830-5098 and the International Marina Institute (941) 480-1212.

- Dispose of trash in appropriate containers or take it home.
- Recycle all products that the marina accepts.
- Use a pumpout facility as frequently as needed.
- Clean up after pets.
- Use the fish cleaning station or clean fish and dispose of waste offshore, not in the marina waters or dumpster.

A sample of an environmental contract from Edwards Boatyard is provided as Appendix A. Call Charlie Swain at (508) 548-2216 for more information.

Contractor Agreements

Establishing agreements with outside contractors before they do work at the marina is a commonly accepted practice. These agreements should include provisions requiring contractors to meet the marina's environmental policies and procedures. Such agreements should require contractors to:

- Abide by all Best Management Practices used by the marina under its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- Be responsible for removal and disposal of all wastes.
- Keep work areas clean to prevent the spread of pollution.
- Use precautionary measures to prevent the escape of hazardous materials. (Specific measures will depend on the contractor's activity, however, general principles such as isolating the work area and confining the activity would be appropriate.)
- Use environmentally-preferable alternatives. (These requirements will again depend on the contractor. Refer to the specific activity in Chapter 4 for lists of products.)
- Sign in at the marina office before beginning work on any boat and sign out when the job is done.

Signs

Interpretive and instructional signs placed at marinas and boat-launching sites are a key method of providing information to the boating public. Signs should educate customers in a positive way as to what activities are allowed and where they should be conducted. A sign listing the environmental services provided by the marina should also be available. Ideas for different types of language for signs are provided in Appendix B.



Fact Sheets

Handing out fact sheets is a cost-effective way to inform customers about environmental protection efforts. Sample fact sheets are provided on the inside back pocket of this guide covering the following topics:

- Boat Maintenance (including Boat Cleaning and Hull and Engine Maintenance)
- Managing Wastewater (Bilgewater, Sewage, and Graywater)
- Trash, Garbage, and Hazardous Waste Disposal Tips
- Boat Operation and Fueling
- Non-Toxic Cleaning Alternatives

Feel free to copy these fact sheets and distribute them to your customers. Free fact sheets on nonpoint source pollution can also be downloaded from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water website at www.epa.gov/owow/nps/facts/.

Notices and Clean Boating Tips in Mailings

To continue to inform your customers about water quality protection, include an environmental note or tip in each regular invoice mailing or newsletter. If possible, have the tip correspond to seasonal activities and issues. For example, spring tips could cover proper collection and recycling of shrink wrap, marina requirements for boat scraping and painting, and the benefits of placing oil absorption pads into the bilge before launching. Summer tips could include a list of pumpout facilities and hours of operation (call CZM at (617) 626-1212 for the current list), a list of materials accepted for recycling at the marina, and information on proper boat cleaning techniques. Fall tips could include information on bilge cleaning and the use of environmentally-preferable antifreeze. Finally, winter tips could cover replacing out-of-date toilets, installing fuel/air separators in the vent line, adding a holding tank, replacing old hoses that became permeable to sewage gas, or ordering engine tune ups for more fuel efficiency.

Clean Boating Events

Including Clean Marina information and activities as part of already organized events is a great way to get the message to boaters. Examples of special events suitable for clean boating activities include fishing derbies, boat shows, cruises, picnics, regattas, and sailing races. Some good "how to" activities include demonstrations on the use of: oil absorption pads to keep bilges and water clean, "green" products for boat cleaning, and spill-free fueling techniques for boats and personal watercraft.

Specific activities are also a valuable way to communicate clean boating practices. For example, you could invite a local school science teacher to visit and temporarily set up an aquarium as a showcase of the plant and animal life being protected. You could also conduct a contest with a prize for the customer that guesses the number of



Clean Boating

Join the free National Clean Boating Campaign and become a partner marina by handing out their free fact sheets and organizing some of the activities successfully used by other marinas. Visit their web site at www.cleanboating.org and download their materials.

Beach Cleanup

COASTSWEEP is the state-wide beach cleanup organized by CZM. Every year the cleanups are led by a dedicated group of local volunteer coordinators who in 2000 organized about 4,000 volunteers who collected almost 70,000 pounds of trash and marine debris from over 150 locations. Some marinas sponsor cleanups including Edwards Boatyard in Falmouth. For more information on how your marina can participate call (617) 626-1223.

species found living in the marina. In addition, you can organize a cleanup day for the shore around the marina, and/or hold a “cleanup cruise” to an island or other location popular with boaters. Invite scuba divers to do a marina bottom cleanup and retrieval of lost objects.

Promoting the Marina’s Good Work

Spread the word about your efforts to protect the environment whenever possible. Community members, particularly boaters looking for a marina, will be interested in what you are doing. The following strategies can help you promote your efforts:

- Participate in association groups (such as the Massachusetts and Cape Cod Marine Trades Associations) and promote your efforts through the industry. Check out websites for the Massachusetts Marine Trade Associations at <http://boatmassachusetts.com/> and the Cape Cod Marine Trades Association at www.cc-waterweb.com/ccmta/index.htm.
- Send a press release to your local paper and/or trade-related publications about the improvements the marina has undertaken, or about the success of a particular program, like pumpout operations.
- Regularly communicate with the harbormaster, Conservation Commission, and Selectmen about marina activities and invite them to participate in clean boating events.

3.3 Financing Clean Business Practices

One of the keys to successfully implementing Clean Marina strategies is to help boaters understand the relationship between good environmental quality and their recreational experience. When a clean marina program is operating properly, boaters will not only be willing to participate in keeping coastal waters clean, they will be willing to invest their time and money. The facility owner can help make Clean Marina practices pay for themselves by marketing new services, renting equipment, selling environmentally-preferable products, and/or implementing an environmental surcharge.

New Services

Adding environmental services can create new revenue streams for your marina. For example, you can charge a fee to perform environmental audits to identify practices, repairs, or products that can reduce a vessel’s impact on the environment. Such an audit could include engine inspections for clean, leak-free, and efficient operation; Marine Sanitation Devices (MSD) system inspections for compliance with Federal law and no discharge area use; fuel system inspections including tanks and lines; and bilge inspections for possible oil leaks. Audits can also indirectly generate business by recommending “green” products or services sold at the marina, or by recommending the installation of pollution-prevention devices.

The marina can also charge for regular maintenance services, including dripless oil changes, engine cleaning and repair, and bilge cleaning and repairs to oil leaks. If your marina is equipped to service boats, some services that you may be able to add to your repair shop include hull vacuum sanding, water-based bottom painting, air/fuel separator installation, holding tank replacement and Y-valve removal, and through hull plugging.

The marina could also rent or sell equipment to do-it-yourselfers. Examples of equipment that you could rent include dustless vacuum sanders and sandpaper disks, tarps or filter cloth for use beneath boat during work, and spray booths.

Sell Environmentally-Preferable Products

Selling environmentally-preferable products at the marina will help your customers practice clean boating, while at the same time financially supporting your environmental efforts. The following products (many which are listed in Chapter 4) could be sold at the marina store:

- glycol antifreeze
- environmentally-preferable teak cleaner
- absorbent pads
- biodegradable soaps
- low nitrogen detergents
- non-toxic, water-based paints
- holding tank additives

Environmental Surcharge

Some facilities have included an environmental surcharge to help cover the costs of future environmental improvements, such as stormwater management and pumpout systems. Keep customers informed and show them formal progress on improvement activities to help solidify their support for and understanding of the surcharge.

Itemized Environmental Charges

Requiring payment for tangible items can help cover costs for keeping the marina clean and efficient. This approach may help to avoid complaints about “blanket” charges. For example, specific charges could be used to cover disposal costs for used oil, oil-saturated absorbent pads, other hazardous wastes, shrink-wrap, and solid waste. In rare cases, charging for the proper disposal of materials may encourage illegal actions for those looking to avoid the charge. To avoid this illegal dumping, consider an environmental surcharge instead.

While this chapter focuses on overall approaches to operating and managing a Clean Marina, see Chapter 4 for details on the Best Management Practices to use to address specific issues at your marina.

Funding Tip

Brewer Yacht Yards adds a 1% environmental surcharge on all invoices to cover the often hidden Clean Marina costs, such as landscaping, staff training, environmental permit applications, and use of general clean up products and disposal. They report that few of their customers object and most appreciate the visible efforts the marinas have made toward cleaner operations.